

## PHL 111: Ethics

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Office hours: By appointment

**Course Description:** This course covers the fundamentals of ethics, including an introduction to the origins and nature of moral right and responsibility. Students will analyze and formulate positions on contemporary ethical issues. **Prerequisite:** Placement test score indicating ENG 101 or successful completion of ENG 100 with a grade of "C" or better.

**Objectives** [things you should be able to do by the end of the semester. I also hope you will want to do them]:

- \* Listen [carefully] to, consider the reasonableness of, and respond [respectfully] to ethical ideas contrary to your own. A part of this is to identify points of agreement as well as disagreement.
- \* Analyze and reflect critically upon ethical issues of personal, professional, societal, and global importance. A part of this is to subject your own views to honest introspection and evaluation.
- \* Identify the assumptions and ethical perspectives that underlie your ethical decisions.
- \* Approach thorny and complex ethical situations in your life thoughtfully, systematically, and creatively.
- \* Recognize the many forms of dehumanization and how they often lead to mistreatment of others.
- \* Reflect on peer, family, social, cultural, professional, and other pressures and influences that inhibit people from following their own consciences.
- \* Consider practical ways to bring your personal activities and ethical priorities closer together.

**Evaluation, grading, and general expectations:** You will receive grades on two exams and ten papers. Scores on the two exams will count for 20% apiece [total of 40% of final grade]. The exams will be non-cumulative, include a combination of short answer and essay questions, and cover all of the material presented in class as well as assigned reading. If you are absent from a class, please meet or communicate with a classmate. I will be happy to answer questions but not repeat everything that transpired in the missed class session. You are free to record lectures and discussion or ask a classmate to do it for you. In the event of serious illness or emergency, one of the exams may be made up without penalty during the following week [unless an extension is granted]. It is up to you to make arrangements with me for the make-up exam. If you also miss the

second exam for serious illness or emergency, you can still make it up within a week, but expect a ten point deduction in the score.

There are eleven assigned papers, and I will count the ten with the highest grades. This means you can skip one if you choose [although the safer path is to complete all eleven and let me drop the lowest score]. You can turn in two papers late without penalty....but within a week after the due date. A third will be accepted late [within a week] but with a ten point deduction. Beyond that, no papers will be accepted. Each of the ten papers will count for 6% of the final grade.

The papers will not receive a separate grade for writing style, wording, or mechanics, but if problems in these areas cause frequent distractions or reduce the clarity of your responses [meaning I have to slow down and reread or spend time figuring out what you are trying to say], I will deduct points. Even when I do not deduct, I may note difficulties or make suggestions for your benefit.

The papers and exams will receive numerical scores that conform to the following ranges: A 94-100; A- 90-93; B+ 87-89; B 84-86; B- 80-83. Same ranges for C and D. Below 60 is F.

Regular attendance, arriving on time, and staying for the entire class period are general expectations. I know things happen [maybe even to me], but please do your best. It is not just your own learning at stake. Your classmates and I are affected as well [my feelings get hurt]. I will look the other way three times but track you down after that. Persistent disregard for the class [and that is how I perceive it] can result in a lower final grade. As always, courtesy and communication prevent many problems. Let's talk if you are having difficulties.

Textbook: A Practical Companion to Ethics, 4th edition, by Anthony Weston. Note....I selected this book because I like its approach to Ethics AND because it is short and inexpensive. I wanted to save you money. But the book is missing pieces of essential content [something the author readily admits], so I will supplement with hand-outs, reading assignments, and material presented via lecture. You are responsible for all of it.

Academic Integrity: Academic integrity is essential to a useful education. Failure to act with academic integrity severely limits a person's ability to succeed in the classroom and beyond. Furthermore, academic dishonesty erodes the legitimacy of every degree awarded by the College. In this class [especially this class], and in the course of your academic career, present only your own best work; clearly document the sources of the material you use from others; and act at all times with honor.

Another note.....all hand-outs distributed in class are in the public domain or given to you with the permission of the author or publisher [for classroom use only].

Withdrawal Policy: See Fall Schedule information for deadlines etc. Still one more note.....if you are thinking about withdrawing, I urge you to discuss this with me first. Maybe nothing either of us can do, but you never know. It's worth a conversation.

Disabilities Statement: See the Student Handbook for TRCC policy. But here is the bottom line...if you have a documented disability [recognized by the College. You need to show me an accommodation letter], let's get together immediately. Don't wait until problems surface later.

Guidelines for the Papers: The first five paper assignments require you to comment on a chapter in the book and accompanying hand-outs. For each chapter and hand-out, state and discuss two ideas that are especially relevant or important to you. Why are they relevant or important? How can you use them in your own ethical development, daily life, or interpersonal relationships? Papers will vary in length, since the number of hand-outs differs from week to week. A general guideline is 2-8 typed, double-spaced pages.

For papers 6-11, you will discuss a number of ethical questions that arise in daily life. Reflect on what you have learned about the process of ethical decision-making during the first part of the course and approach the questions thoughtfully and carefully. Read at least one article and talk to at least one knowledgeable individual about any or all of the questions. A general guideline for these papers is 4-10 typed, double-spaced pages. During class periods that we discuss these questions, I will also lecture on important contemporary ethical issues of national or global importance.

#### Class Schedule:

Aug. 30... Intro to the course. Assignment for next week: Read chapter 1 of the text and accompanying hand-outs. Write paper # 1 and be prepared to discuss.

Sept. 6.....Discuss chapter 1 and related concepts. Assignment for next week: Read chapter 3 [we are skipping ch 2] and accompanying hand-out. Write paper # 2 and be prepared to discuss.

Sept. 13.....Discuss chapter 3, hand-out, and related concepts. Assignment for next week: Read chapter 4 and package of hand-outs on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Write paper # 3 and be prepared to discuss.

Sept. 20.....Discuss chapter 4, hand-outs, and related concepts. Assignment for next week: Read chapter 5 [no hand-out]. Write paper # 4 and be prepared to discuss.

Sept. 27.....Discuss chapter 5 and related concepts. Assignment for next week: Read chapter 6 and accompanying hand-out. Write paper # 5 and be prepared to discuss.

Oct. 4.....Discuss chapter 6, hand-out, and related concepts. Opportunity to ask questions for exam.

Oct. 11.....Exam # 1. Overview of the remainder of the class. Assignment for next week: Write paper # 6 and be prepared to discuss.

Oct. 18.....Discuss paper # 6 and related concepts. Lecture on contemporary ethical issues. Assignment next week: Write paper # 7 and be prepared to discuss.

Oct. 25.....Discuss paper # 7 and related concepts. Lecture on contemporary ethical issues. Assignment for next week: Write paper # 8 and be prepared to discuss.

Nov. 1.....Discuss paper # 8 and related concepts. Lecture on contemporary ethical issues. Assignment for next week: Write paper # 9 and be prepared to discuss.

Nov. 8.....Discuss paper # 9 and related concepts. Lecture on contemporary ethical issues. Assignment for next week: Write paper # 10 and be prepared to discuss.

Nov. 15.....Discuss paper # 10 and related concepts. Lecture on contemporary ethical issues. Assignment for Nov. 29 [next week is Thanksgiving]: Write paper # 11 and be prepared to discuss.

Nov. 29.....Discuss paper # 11 and related concepts. Lecture on contemporary ethical issues. Opportunity to ask questions for the exam.

Dec. 6....Exam # 2. No assignment for next week.

Dec. 13.....Concluding Thoughts